

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respond herein to the Advisory Action mailed May 9, 2008 and Final Office Action dated January 24, 2008.

Applicants' attorneys appreciate the Examiner's continued thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

Claims 5, 10, 12-18, 23, and 28-36 are pending in this application. Claims 5, 14, 23, and 32 have been allowed. Claims 10, 12, 13, 15-18, 28-31 and 33-36 have been rejected.

The inventions according to claims 10 and 28 are characterized by a relationship between positions of a plurality of guide parts that are stacked in a multistage. Claims 10 and 28 have been amended to clarify this relationship. Specifically, claim 10 now recites:

another outer guard corresponding to a chemical solution guide part positioned immediately above said lowermost chemical solution guide part and includes:

a fourth cylindrical part arranged coaxially with said substrate holding part;

a second projected part projecting obliquely upwardly toward said substrate holding part from the upper end of said fourth cylindrical part; and

a fifth cylindrical part extending vertically downwardly from the lower end of said fourth cylindrical part,

a first passage of said plurality of processing liquid passages is formed by said third cylindrical part of said lowermost outer guard and said fifth cylindrical part of said guide part positioned immediately above said outer guard

Claim 28 now recites:

said second processing liquid passage is formed by said first guard and said second cylindrical part of said second guard,

said third processing liquid passage is formed by said fifth cylindrical part of said second guard and said fourth cylindrical part of said third guard

claim 28 also recited:

said second guard is curved such that said inclined part forming said second guide part is positioned above said fourth cylindrical part.

Thus, in claim 10, a first cylindrical part forming the lowermost chemical solution guide part and receiving a chemical solution flying spattering is disposed outside “a first passage of said plurality of processing liquid passages is formed by said third cylindrical part ... and said fifth cylindrical part” and “corresponding to a chemical solution guide part positioned

immediately above said lowermost chemical solution guide part.” The third cylindrical part of the outer guard forming the lowermost chemical solution guide part and the fifth cylindrical part forming another outer guard of a chemical solution guide part positioned immediately above the lowermost chemical solution guide. Further, the inclined part of the outer guard corresponding to the lowermost chemical solution guide part is positioned above the fifth cylindrical part of the another outer guard corresponding to a chemical solution guide part positioned immediately above.

In accordance with the invention of claims 10 and 28, the first cylindrical part is positioned at the furthest side from the substrate among components of the guide parts. In other words, the present application can ensure enough space from the substrate holding part to the further side of the guide part without increasing the size of the substrate processing apparatus as a whole. Therefore, the present invention produces an advantageous effect that a processing liquid flying spattering from the substrate holding part side can be surely recovered while suppressing the increase in the size of the substrate processing apparatus as a whole.

In contrast, none of the prior art references cited by the Examiner teach, disclose, or suggest the above discussed characteristics of the present invention. In the Final Office Action mailed January 24, 2008, the Examiner rejected independent claims 10 and 28 as being unpatentable over the following prior art references: U.S. Patent No. 4,903,717 to Sumnitsch (“Sumnitsch”), Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 11-87294 (“’294”), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0043275 to Okuda (“Okuda”), and U.S. Patent No. 6,807,974 Ono et al. (“Ono”). However, Okuda only discloses a single structure cup, but fails to disclose or suggest how to stack this cup in a multistage, and further, also fails to disclose or suggest a processing liquid passage or “a first passage of said plurality of processing liquid passages” as recited in claim 10 or “said second processing liquid passage and said third processing liquid passage are inserted into a discharged liquid tank corresponding to a lifting movement of said lifting part” as recited in claim 28. ‘294 fails to disclose or suggest a guard as recited in claims 10 and 28 and fails to disclose or suggest how to stack Okuda’s cup in a multistage. Sumnitsch fails to disclose or suggest the above discussed characteristics of the present invention.

Accordingly, Sumnitsch, ‘294, Okuda, Ono, and their combination do not render independent claims 10 and 28 obvious.


Moreover, claims 5, 14, 23, and 32 are allowable.

Claims 12-13, 15-18, 29-31, and 33-36 depend directly or indirectly from above discussed independent claims 10 and 28 and are, therefore, allowable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the respective independent claims.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application, allow the claims as amended and pass this case to issue.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING
SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH
THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE EFS
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Respectfully submitted,



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